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BRITISH INDIA.

SPEECHES

DELIVERED BY

MAJOR-GENERAL BRIGGS

AND

GEORGE THOMPSON, Esq.

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF

4265.109

THE GLASGOW SOCIETY

FOR

PROMOTING THE CAUSE OF UNIVERSAL EMANCIPATION,
PROTECTING THE ABORIGINES OF THE BRITISH DEPENDENCIES, AND
BETTERING THE CONDITION OF THE NATIVES OF INDIA;

HELD AUGUST 1, 1839.

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William Lloyd Garrison
July 8, 1899.

SPEECHES, &c.

4265.109

[NOTE.—As the following Speeches illustrate the character and present condition of the natives of British India, and the intimate relation between the advancement of the welfare of India, and the extirpation of the cruel and expensive systems of Slavery and the African Slave Trade, they are submitted to the public in their present form, accompanied by the hope that they may increase the interest already awakened in behalf of our fellow-subjects in the East, and promote the objects of the BRITISH INDIA SOCIETY.]

THE CHAIRMAN (the Rev. Dr WARDLAW), in introducing MAJOR-GENERAL BRIGGS to the meeting, stated that the gallant General had spent thirty-two years in India—had administered the affairs of the government in several provinces—had travelled over almost every part of British India—was the author of an elaborate and able work on the Land Tax of India, and a member of the Committee of the London British India Society. He (Dr WARDLAW) was most glad to invite their attention to so distinguished a coadjutor in the cause of humanity.

MAJOR-GENERAL BRIGGS then rose, amidst much applause, and said :—After a long and dark night of ignorance, light is beginning to burst upon us from its natural quarter, and the condition of eighty millions of our fellow-subjects in the East has begun to attract notice in England. Those millions have been shut out from our attention by their vast distance, and from our sympathies by the great ignorance which has pervaded this country regarding them. Within late years, some of our countrymen have published their travels amongst these people ; and in giving lively pictures of their

habits, so different from our own, yet apparently so simple and so primitive, they have excited much interest. To admire the people of India, it is only necessary to have lived among them as I have done for more than thirty years, and to have studied their character through their own languages—(Cheers)—and I defy any one who has done so, to look back on them without kindliness, nor to think on them without feelings of regard. Before I speak of the condition of the country, I shall therefore say a few words respecting the character of the Natives. The late Rammohun Roy, who visited you some years ago, affords a fair sample of a Hindoo of the Bengal Presidency; and the Prince of Oude, who is now in London, and who passed through Glasgow about this time last year, is a favourable specimen of a Mohammedan native gentleman from Upper India. (Cheers.) The Parsees of Bombay seem, perhaps, to exhibit stronger proofs of attachment to our countrymen than the natives of any other portion of the East. They are an intelligent and an enterprising race, as may be supposed, when I tell you that some, who are in frequent correspondence with Sir Charles Forbes, became possessed of great wealth from slender beginnings. One of these, in particular, commenced his career by buying and selling empty bottles, till, from a small shop, he extended his concern to a warehouse. He afterwards engaged in other business, and eventually left off his mercantile pursuits in 1830. In that year he addressed a letter in English to his friend Sir C. Forbes, which evinces an elegant as well as a devout mind, and to parts of which I shall now refer you. The paragraphs I allude to are as follow. The first has reference to a letter from Sir Charles Forbes to him, and the second to the sudden death of a mutual friend, Mr James Forbes, a partner in the house of Forbes and Company.

Extracts from a Letter dated 5th January, 1830, from Jenesetjee Jujubehyr to Sir Charles Forbes, Bart., M.P.

‘I feel greatly obliged by your kind expressions and good opinion of me, which are indeed highly flattering. I beg to assure you, my honoured Sir, that if I at all merit the encomiums which you have

so profusely lavished on me, it is for the most part to be ascribed to the advantage I have derived from studiously adhering to the friendly and valuable advice which you condescended to give me on your departure from Bombay.'

'It is with feelings of the deepest sorrow I take my pen to console with you on the decease of our much-esteemed friend, Mr James Forbes, who met his death on the 2d ultimo, by an accident, producing a fracture of the skull, from which he shortly after expired. Having had the honour of great intimacy and friendship with him, I had frequent occasions to witness his nobleness of heart and social virtues. It is, therefore, by no means surprising that your good self, as well as his other friends, require extraordinary fortitude on this melancholy occasion.

'But, as there are none exempted, in this transitory world, from discharging this debt of nature, however severe the loss may be, the only alternative left for us is an entire resignation to the will of Providence, whose dispensations are always just, and unquestionably for our ultimate good.' (Cheers.)

This good man, in the possession of considerable wealth, has lately given £10,000 sterling to endow a native hospital for his countrymen in Bombay—(Cheers)—and trusts that the government will add the interest annually of a similar amount, which has been done. Since that he has, in addition, contributed £1000 more to aid in building the hospital. In a letter on the subject, written 4th September, 1838, he adds the following postscript :—

'If you find any difficulty to get the sanction of the Court for 6 per cent. (on the £10,000), in that case I give you full discretionary power to increase my donation as you may deem proper to attain the object I have in view, for securing 6000 Rupees (£600) per annum to this institution for ever.' (Cheers.)

The son of Jenesetjee, the well known ship-builder in Bombay, who died, leaving a very small fortune, has lately sent two of his sons to the care of Sir Charles, in London, to be placed under the

tuition of a clergyman in that vicinity, in order that they may be well grounded in the English language, and in mathematics. They are then to be sent to the English building docks, to study the science of naval architecture, before they return to their own country. In Madras, the late Ram Raja, a Brahmin, whom I had an opportunity of placing in the highest responsible judicial station in Mysore, was by no means inferior, in point of European acquirements, to Rammohun Roy, and wrote during his lifetime an interesting and learned work on the architecture and sculpture of the Hindoos, adorned with a vast number of plans and plates, indicating a high state of the art of building at a remote period of antiquity. This essay has been published in the Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society. So much for their men ; now let us say a word of their literature. Those who are learned in Sanscrit have pronounced some portions of the Ramayan and the Mahabharat, two of their heroic poems, to be not inferior to the Iliad and the Odyssey ; and every day is developing histories which have not yet been translated, among the Hindoos. The Mohammedan historians are as faithful, if not so copious, as Livy or Tacitus. The commentaries of Baber, written by himself, like those of Cæsar, are little, if at all, inferior to them in simplicity, and abound in reflections, the result of an acute and observing mind. With their kingdoms, the patrons of their literature have departed, and all composition, whether historical or rhetorical, has disappeared. The means of popular education, however, are still abundant ; for no village in India is without its schoolmaster, who enjoys a portion of tax-free land from the village, in virtue of his office ; nor is there the son of a Brahmin, or of a merchant, banker, or tradesman, throughout all India, who has not been taught to read and write with ease, if not with elegance. The former, in order to perform his duties as a teacher of religion, or as a clerk in a public office ; the latter, to conduct his business as a book-keeper and accountant. It is true, that at present this is the extent of their education ; but what a mighty instrument is thus ready made to our hands, for conveying useful and general instruction through the village institutions, if the government would, as it certainly might do, require that each village schoolmaster should in fu-

ture undergo an examination, and obtain a certificate of qualification, before he was allowed to assume his office, whenever it devolved on him ; but such measures must be conducted *through the agency of the natives themselves*. If we look at the progress made in the arts and manufactures, before we came among them, we shall find they were little inferior to ourselves in almost all that is performed by manual labour. They were once deeply skilled in the sciences of astronomy, mathematics, and medicine ; indeed, Dr Royle (an author whose knowledge and experience is extensive, and whose authority is very high) is of opinion, that much that was known to the Greeks and to the Arabians of pharmacy, was acquired from the Hindoos. It has been lately shown, that the people of the South of India alone possessed the secret of making steel in the time of Alexander the Great, and that they manufacture it at the present time on principles as scientific as any that have been adopted for the same purpose in Europe. (Cheers.) With regard to their knowledge of agriculture, I have myself witnessed it conducted (*on tax free lands*) with as much skill as one sees here—aye, in Scotland—which is saying all that can be said for the art—(Hear, hear)—and in horticulture, as regards pruning, budding, grafting, and propagating by layers, they have nothing to learn from the West. It is of a people placed thus high in the scale of human knowledge, of whom I am now addressing you. (Hear, hear.) It is not for the savages of North America, the Negroes and Hottentots of Africa, nor the cannibals of the islands of the Pacific Ocean, that I ask your sympathy and claim your protection, though all these are justly entitled to your benevolent regard, which I am happy to find you have bestowed on them. (Cheers.) The people of whom I now speak, were in an advanced state of civilisation when our forefathers painted their bodies, and wore the skins of beasts. (Hear, hear.) It is the misfortunes, brought on them by the natural effects of despotism and internal bad government, that have rendered them subject to foreign yokes during the last eight centuries. They have lost perhaps some of that high polish which literature imparts, and which belongs only to nations in a state of prosperity ; but they have neither forgotten, nor have they lost, those venerable institu-

tions which prevail, more or less, under their native Princes, but which it is to be regretted that our ignorance, on the one hand, and the contempt in which we usually hold what we do not understand, on the other, have combined to disregard, to trample under foot, and to destroy. (Cheers.) Those institutions, of which Europeans in general know little, require only to be studied and comprehended, to form the ground-work of future good government; but, in our present state of information, we rule the country blindly and selfishly, and are the indirect, I might rather say the direct, cause of the dreadful calamities which, alas! too frequently visit it in the shape of dearth. I have said, Sir, our nation is ignorant of every thing regarding India, except of some of the miseries which it occasionally endures; but it is owing to the exertions of such societies as this, that the people of this country are beginning to be informed. (Cheers.)

So much has been said lately on the subject of the famines that have desolated that beautiful land, that it will be unnecessary for me to dwell at large on them. I will, however, just glance at those which have occurred within the last twenty years of peace on the Indian continent, an event, it should be observed, without parallel in the course of our rule. In 1820-21, a famine raged in the southern part of the Deccan. In 1822-23, another famine prevailed over the same track of country. In 1823-24, famine also prevailed from Caudeish in lat. 22, to Mysore in 14, an extent of nearly 500 miles. In 1833, a famine extended more to the eastward, over an area of 50,000 square miles; and during the months of March, April, and May, there were no fewer than eight thousand persons fed daily by the Government alone, in the city of Madras, besides those who shared the bounty of private establishments, formed for the purpose all over the country, to which natives and Europeans alike contributed. In 1835-36, the famine spread over the northern portions of the Madras provinces, and extended to Orissa. In 1837-38, the greatest of all the famines prevailed in the north-western provinces of the Bengal presidencies, which carried off, as we are told, 500,000 human beings; and, strange to relate, during the latter period, as much grain was exported from the lower parts of Ben-

gal as would have fed half-a-million of people at a lb. of rice a day for a whole year ! (Shame.) In the last and present year, dearth has made its appearance again, within the Bombay and Madras presidencies, and threatens a repetition of a similar calamity. Of such things we are at length fully informed ; and shall we not ask, How that land, which once was a land flowing with milk and honey, and as capable as our own beloved country, of becoming like it the garden of the universe, has so fallen off ? Why these famines occur so frequently, and why they are not averted ? (Hear, hear.) Does the Government do nothing to ward off these evils ? I answer, nothing. (Hear, hear.) When the evil arrives, it does exert itself. It opens the public treasury—it establishes alms-houses—it employs those who can work, but how long can any country continue populous, or even inhabited at all, with such frightful desolation, so frequently repeated ? (Hear, hear.) Or what government can afford to dole out of the public purse food to its famishing subjects with one hand, while it is compelled to remit its revenue on the other ? (Hear.) All this, too, has happened at a period when its rulers have engaged in a war, and have adopted a policy, which, in the West, will advance the frontier of our Indian empire to the very frontiers of the Russian dominions, since Persia may now be deemed an integral part of them. While again, we are only awaiting the success of that expedition to commence another war in the East on the side of Burmah, which cost the Indian people, a few years ago, sixteen millions sterling, and which, from the position it left us in, involves the necessity of this new evil. It is not on a political question we are met to-night ; and this subject should not have been introduced, but that such military expeditions do materially affect the means, when there may be the inclination to do good to the inhabitants, who are bound to pay the expense of such wars. It is in that point of view only, I say, such extravagant political projects do indirectly affect the bettering the condition of our fellow-subjects in the East. (Cheers.) But, unhappily for them, the improvement of their condition is the last thing that is thought of ; and yet, if one reads the accounts of the money that is annually expended on public works, one might fancy that much is done. In order to elucidate this, I

will take the liberty of reading an extract from a Bombay newspaper, dated 18th May, 1839, the channel of the Government panegyric :—

‘ We have often endeavoured to prove that one of the greatest obstacles to Indian prosperity, is the wretched condition of the roads, and other means of communication. We have shown, in a former number, that, until the year 1830, we derived no agricultural produce whatever from the vast and fertile plains of Berar, and supplied that district with but a single article, viz. salt, which, owing to the almost impracticable condition of the roads, was conveyed from this place on the backs of bullocks, a distance of 600 miles. In that year, one of the native salt merchants tried the experiment of conveying back to Bombay, upon his returning bullocks, some of the cotton which abounds in that country; the experiment was completely successful, and next year, 10,000 loads were brought by the same means. In 1836, 90,000 loads were received from that one district. The road, however, if it can be so called, is still in such a condition, that the conveyance of the article to our market imposes an additional charge of 80 per cent. upon its original price; a sum, we need scarcely say, literally lost to the seller, the buyer, and the country. The subject has at length been taken up in good earnest by Government. Surveys have been made, and a plan for the construction of a good wheel carriage road has been sent home for the sanction of the Court of Directors, the estimated expense being upwards of thirty thousand pounds. The extension of this line to Calcutta would, we may observe, not cost more than forty or fifty lacs, four or five hundred thousand pounds, and would be attended with unspeakable advantages to both sides of India.

‘ The necessity of something deserving the name of road, between Bombay and Agra, is now felt by every one, and the governments of both Presidencies have zealously entered upon its construction. The distance between the two places is stated to be 782 miles. The road is actually completed for 277 miles, and surveys of the remaining portion are in progress. We shall, at an early period, notice this subject more fully. Besides these two great lines, other shorter

ones, in various parts of the Bombay presidency, are, some actually begun, others in course of survey; and others again, after having received the sanction of the Indian Governments, are under reference to the authorities at home.

‘Such are the promises of a better system which we remark throughout the provinces;—the spirit of improvement is still more active at the Presidency. In proof of this assertion, we shall merely notice the various works, which, having met with the approval and sanction of Government, are at this moment under reference to the authorities at home.

‘1. A large additional yard for shipping to be made near the saluting battery, with slips, capable of building ships of war of the first class. Expense estimated at three lacs.

‘2. Lengthening the upper old dock for the admission of large steamers.

‘3. Erection of three slips for steamers to the eastward of the present dock-yard.

‘4. Building extra coal-depots at Calaba (estimate now in preparation).

‘5. Building of new Court-house and offices; estimate one lac and 69,000 rupees (£16,900.)

‘6. Large public building, to include a Bank, Post-office, Exchange, and apartments for other public offices; estimate, one lac.

‘Besides these, there are just finished, or are about to be finished:—

‘7. An extensive sea-wall and quay, from Bhore-bunder to the Slaughter-house.

‘8. The beautiful new tower to the Cathedral to be finished, we understand, next month.

‘9. The elegant Bazar gates now completed.’

Thus it is in every thing. When we ask what has the Government done for the direct benefit of the people in public works, there is exhibited, among others, a list of roads that have been made, and a few drains or ditches cut in the neighbourhood of the Presidencies, whose origin may be traced to the convenience of the European population.

On referring to the Parliamentary returns, made by the East India Company, of public works executed in India, I find in the list a description of roads termed *military roads*, and of bridges denominated in Bengal *Shakspeare bridges*, so called after a gentleman who was once Postmaster-General, and who adopted a plan for transmitting the foot post over mountain torrents, which frequently impeded it during the rainy season. Then, of these military roads, there is hardly one of them over which I have not travelled; and I say, without fear of contradiction, that there is scarcely ten miles of any part of them on which, during the rains, a carriage could be driven, or a loaded cart proceed without danger. (Hear, hear.) Roads are marked out, it is true, they are levelled for the time being, and, till the wet season sets in, they are tolerably good; but one or two years serve to break them up entirely; roads without metal, without drains, without bridges,—and, to be rendered available even for the march of an army with its stores, a detachment of pioneers is required to precede the troops. (Hear.) There is another description of roads, however, to which much attention and money is devoted. I mean the roads within and around the Presidencies, and the principal civil and military stations. Each road not extending beyond three or four miles in length, and used purely for European gentlemen and ladies to drive their carriages. (Hear, hear.) Another feature in the road-making of India must not be forgotten, and this is the practice of constructing roads to render places of retreat during the hot months conveniently accessible to governors, judges, and other Europeans, who are prompted to visit them on account of ill health or pleasure. I allude especially to those roads leading up to the salutary hill retreats of the Nilghiries from Madras, and the Mahableswur Hills from Bombay. There, stupendous difficulties to the approach of hitherto inaccessible mountains, of 9000 feet in the one case, and half that height in the other, have been overcome for the purpose of conducting the European's palankeen with convenience suited to the luxuries of the East, to those hitherto unfrequented regions. (Hear.) The person who most devoted his attention to road-making in India, was your late honoured representative, Lord William Bentinck, than whom no one

ever evinced a greater sympathy for our native population, or more desired to better their condition, provided always that it could be effected with economy. (Cheers.) It is to him the people owe the road of 277 miles in length, which is alluded to in the Bombay paper of the 18th May, an extract from which has been read. This road was finished in 1831, and it was then intended to carry it on to Omrawutty, in the heart of the cotton districts; but eight years have elapsed without fulfilling the intention, and we now learn, as if for the first time, that an estimate has actually been submitted to England for sanction. (Hear.) Such has been the effect of making this road, that although only *four hundred* wheel carriages passed to and fro during the second year that it was opened, there were, in 1837-38, no fewer than *six thousand* carts plying on it; but as the cotton has to be brought from Berar, the place of its growth, two hundred and fifty miles to the road, it is still dispatched on pack bullocks, and is so carried to its journey's end; and the road is, as far as that traffic is concerned, at present useless. (Hear.) As an instance of the resources of the country, both in the materials and in the skill of the natives, it will not be amiss to mention, that an iron suspension bridge, of two hundred feet span, over which carriages pass, was constructed by the officer who superintended this very road, at the trifling cost of £4800 sterling, under his supervision, by the natives, without the aid of any European artificer. (Cheers.) Dr Spry, in his work, entitled 'Modern India,' thus speaks of this bridge:—

‘ This suspension bridge has been constructed entirely out of the resources of the district, and by an amateur mechanic, who had never seen an iron suspension bridge in his life! and yet we have an assurance from the visiting engineer for the north-western provinces and Central India, Major Irvine, C. B. that he had seen nothing superior to it in England. The undertaking was altogether an experimental one; for, as I have elsewhere mentioned, there are no roads in this part of the country of any extent, and, consequently, little or no traffic between remote places; its undertaking, therefore, originated in a desire to ascertain the capabilities of the materials and the workmen employed.’

After a minute history of the progress and completion of the work, Dr Spry says:—‘Notwithstanding the countless extra expenses incidental to a first undertaking of this kind, and the distance to which all the materials were obliged to be transported, from the work-yard at Saugor to the place of erection, the bridge has been pronounced cheaper than those in Calcutta constructed of English materials. Here, then, we have a structure which, in elegance, in magnitude, and in durability, may vie with the most perfect specimens of the kind in civilised Europe; and yet, fashioned out of the oxydised metal as it lies embedded in the bowels of the earth, by the rude hands of a class of artizans, by no means as expert as their countrymen in Northern Hindostan; and the whole emanating from the genius and unremitting industry of one master-mind! Does not this speak volumes? Does it not satisfactorily show what India can do when her resources are properly drawn forth? And is it not a reproof to all who would seek alike to depreciate the country and the capabilities of her people? While an empire possesses engineers and artificers, who are able to accomplish such a work as the Saugor Iron Suspension Bridge, the infusion of capital is all that is required to render that country great among the civilised kingdoms of the world; and to this point must India arrive, if proper steps be taken to bring her capabilities into active exertion.’ (Loud cheers.)

After this, what might not be effected by the ingenuity and industry of the natives themselves. (Cheers.) Roads and bridges and canals are so essential to the prosperity of a country, that the first thing every settler in the back woods of America thinks of is, how he is to convey the produce of his farm to market, and how he is to obtain the articles he may himself require from the nearest town. Now, unfortunately the people of India are kept by our defective system of finance so poor that they cannot themselves afford to make roads; and the Government itself has hitherto looked upon their construction as an object to be attempted only after prosperity has been obtained, rather than as one of the first steps to accomplish it. (Cheers.) And what, Sir, do you think the roads and canals, which have been constructed throughout so extensive a re-

gion, has cost the state within the last forty years? Why, less than was expended on the railway of thirty miles which connects Liverpool with Manchester. (Cheers.) Whenever a road is proposed by a public functionary, and recommended by the Government there to the Home authorities here—the constituted Guardians and Protectors of India!—they are told the finances do not admit of the expense; but if government palaces are to be repaired or built—if court-houses are required for the convenience of European judges—or public offices for European collectors—or expensive barracks for European soldiers—or magazines for military stores—there are abundance of funds; and if there are none, why, money is taken up in loans, so that the Indian public debt amounts, at this moment, to nearly forty millions of pounds sterling. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) Nothing, however, is ever borrowed or expended to improve the condition of the people of India, who alone pay the interest of such loans. (Hear.) When the Americans require to make roads they come to London and borrow the money, rather than be without them. They justly consider such debts to be like those a farmer contracts for a time to purchase seed—(cheers)—but the Indian Government, less wise, keeps in its treasury, in hard cash, from year's end to year's end, a sum of from eight to nine millions, about half the amount of the whole revenue, which lies idle and is withdrawn from currency, in a country where paper money is unknown, while it pays five per cent. on a debt of nearly forty millions contracted in making unprofitable wars. (Hear, hear.) If the Government would but put their specie into circulation instead of hoarding it up in their cash chests,—if they would but expend the £400,000 or the £450,000 a-year they now pay in interest by this arrangement, in constructing useful public works for the benefit of the people, they would be sowing a fruitful crop which would yield to the State an abundant harvest. (Loud cheers.)

I must now advert to another permanent, and, indeed, the most grievous calamity under which the afflicted people of India have been suffering, are suffering, and I fear are long likely to suffer, unless they be relieved by some novel and extraneous means, to which neither the Government here nor the natives of India have been

accustomed. Exposure in regard to the former ; and sympathy and English advocacy in favour to the latter. The subject I allude to is THE LAND TAX OF INDIA. (Loud cries of hear, hear.) It is a subject which, owing to the ignorance of Europeans, has been involved in intricacy, and is environed (in the present state of information, and mode of thinking of our Indian legislators) with difficulties which they consider insuperable, difficulties which arise out of a perverseness on their own parts ; originating partly in ignorance and partly in supineness. To explain this state of things, it would be necessary to enter into a detail of which the time does not admit, but it may be sufficient to say that the whole solves itself into these two questions—Are we, or are we not, proprietors or landlords of the soil in India ? (hear, hear) and, if we are so, is it expedient that we should derive the full rent from our own lands ? To this I reply, and I challenge the Court of Directors—aye, and the whole world—to contradict me, that by right the Government is not the proprietor of the soil (loud cheers) ; that we have assumed to be true that which is absolutely false ; and that the main secret of the cause of the distress of the people, and of the Government as to its finances, originates in that erroneous, unjust, and cruel assumption. (Cheers.) A right unclaimed by our predecessors, and unheard of in history. I repeat, Sir, unheard of in history. Who ever heard of a state proclaiming itself an universal landlord (hear)—the proprietor of every man's field, to take from it what suits it ? (Cheers.) Fields which have descended in India from father to son, and which have been tilled by the same family for generations ; or fields which have been bought and sold hundreds of times, during hundreds of years, without so monstrous a claim put forth on the part of Government ; but whenever any Government assumes a right to tax the soil to any amount that it chooses, then I admit that government virtually becomes the owner, if it please, of the soil ; but only in the same way that a robber becomes the owner of my purse when he has compelled me to deliver it up to him. (Great cheering.) This is no hyperbole. It is no figure of speech. It is simply true. When the Indian or any other government shall tax my house or my land, so as to compel me to abandon either one or the other, it may call itself pro-

prietor, and exercise that privilege by might, which right, if respected, would prevent. (Hear, hear.) Neither the Hindoo nor the Mohammedan Sovereigns, though arbitrary enough in all conscience, ever perpetrated this injustice. They never claimed a proprietary right in every man's field, but they did claim as a tax a *limited* portion of the crop, a barbarous exaction to be sure, and calculated to depress industry, as the clerical tithe did till lately in England; but still a certain portion, not less than three-fourths of the remainder of the crop, was left to the farmer. When the native government desired to convert its portion into money, it had to look out a purchaser, and usually endeavoured to sell it to the cultivator himself; but in most instances it was sold through the small country banker, or grain merchant, who paid the cash into the treasury; and, if required to advance the money, he received a bonus for the same, and made the best of his bargain. The British Government considered this practice objectionable on two accounts; first, as becoming a partner in the labour and capital of the farmer; and secondly, as being attended with all the inconvenience of converting the grain into rupees. So, without further ado, it fixed an assumed capability on every field to produce (hear); it fixed an assumed price on the produce itself (hear, hear); and it then fixed from thirty-five to forty-five per cent. of the money value of that produce as its share for ever; excepting, indeed, when the proprietor should lay out money and dig a well, so as to irrigate his land, when a new assessment was made in proportion to the increased value of the crop. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) Now, as any person who ever cultivated a field in his life, or who ever sold its produce from year to year, knows that the same field does not yield the same quantity of corn every year, nor does corn fetch the same price in the market every year, so may he conceive what must be the condition of the landowner who has to make up, in money, to the Government at the end of every harvest, 45 per cent. of what his field was supposed to yield when corn is of only half the value that it was when the assessment was made. I hope I have made myself understood. (Cheers.) If I have, you will comprehend the condition of the Indian landholder, and the little chance there is, under

the present system, of the millions of acres now lying waste ever being occupied to the benefit of the people, or to the advantage of the state. What is the result of this system? The land is abandoned by the owner. The Government makes a similar bargain with some one else who has no title to occupy the same land except that which an arbitrary Government gives after compelling the real owner to desert it; and this new tenant, entering on his farm with a favourable condition for the first three or four years, abandons it also when the time for paying the full assessment arrives. If there be any one present who can look on this picture with apathy, I envy not his feelings. (Cheers.) The lands are taxed till they are driven out of cultivation—the roads are neglected, and the produce, if raised, in excess of the demands on the spot, is left to rot—the abundance of one district cannot be conveyed to prevent famine in another—little else but edible grains is cultivated for want of markets, the people are excluded from all share in the administration of their own concerns; their institutions are neglected or overthrown; their punchayat, or trial by jury, in civil or in criminal cases, is withheld from them, and they are handed over to the justice of a foreigner, generally ill acquainted with their language, unacquainted with their habits, and who has no sympathy for, nor feels the least interest in, the whole race to which the parties belong. There is no injustice in the fiscal and municipal administration which India has escaped; nor in her commercial intercourse which she has not been made to endure. (Cheers.) Who is to blame? I answer, England, aye, all England! (Cheers) which transfers the destiny of a people and a country, little short in extent and population to Christian Europe, to the mercy of those few who are permitted to govern her, and who govern but with one view, the advantage of the mother country to the ruin of India. (Hear, hear.) Who is it that refuses to listen to the appeals made from year to year by the governors on the spot, on the abuses of the land-tax, but the Home authorities? (Cheers.) Who is it that, in spite of justice, has imposed, and continues to impose, commercial laws, which compel India to receive, without duties, all the raw products of England, such as the metals, &c. and imposes from

ten to twenty, nay, in some cases, one thousand per cent. on her raw produce when imported into England? (Hear.) Who is it that causes no higher a duty than two and a-half per cent. on England's manufactured goods imported into India, to be levied, and lays from ten to twenty per cent. duty on some, and more than one hundred per cent. on others? The Parliament of Great Britain. (Loud cheers.) What other colony is treated in this way? Which of our colonies is wholly unrepresented, directly or indirectly, as is India? What protection has she against the grossest injustice, and to whom can she appeal with hope of redress? I reply, no where on earth. Her appeal is wafted in sighs, and is exhibited in tears at the throne of God. (Loud cheers.) Is this the way in which the people, whom we term free, should be treated? Is this the way in which those people, whom I have before described, deserve to be dealt with? What is the result of this absurd and even iniquitous conduct? Does India contribute a large revenue per head to the State? No. While England contributes £2, her colonies, aye, slave colonies, too, contributed from 30s. to 32s. 6d. per head; while the convict colonies of Van Dieman's Land pay £2, 12s. and Sydney £3 a-head in taxes, what does the Government receive from the poor Indian? not quite 4s.! While the same colonies, which I have described, consume £5 of our manufactures per head, India literally consumes but sixpenny worth. Reflect on these facts; consider what these people would contribute in revenue, and take of our manufactures, if ruled with wisdom I was going to say, but I say with common sense and common justice. Shall these people continue to be so misruled? Forbid it justice—forbid it Heaven! I feel that all which is required to set these matters right, is to place them in their true light before my countrymen of Great Britain. I know they only want to be informed correctly, and they will demand justice. India will not continue without representatives! She will be represented in the British India Society. I feel confident there is no philanthropic heart in this building, that does not at this moment beat with indignation and with sympathy at the picture I have drawn, and I look to the time when thousands, nay hundreds of thousands, of generous Britons will, when

the true state of that fair land be well known, unite and make themselves heard, whenever it becomes necessary, through their own representatives in Parliament, and that they will finally obtain—JUSTICE FOR INDIA! (Protracted cheering.) I move the following resolution:—

‘ That it is established, by ample evidence, that there exists, throughout British India—a country of vast extent and great fertility, whose inhabitants are intelligent and industrious, and whose ancient institutions might be made instrumental to good government—an amount of destitution and misery, which demand the immediate sympathy and succour of the people of Great Britain.’

W. CRAIG, Esq. seconded the resolution.

The Chairman said, after the important facts laid before them, in a manner that breathed such a spirit of humanity and freedom, and at the same time in sentiments so noble, he was sure that they would carry the resolution with one heart and soul. (Cheers.) The resolution was then carried unanimously.

Mr GEORGE THOMPSON rose amidst loud cheers, and said,—Sir, I congratulate you and this great meeting, upon the arrival of the first anniversary of the day which witnessed the bestowal of entire freedom upon the coloured population of the West India colonies.

congratulate you upon the admirable and irreproachable conduct of those upon whom this right was conferred by the justice of the British nation—they were unrevengeful while they were slaves, and they have been equally grateful and tractable as freemen. (Cheers) Their conduct has been marked by prudence, firmness, reasonableness, and industry. (Cheers.) While they have not pliantly and submissively bent to the will of the planter, neither have they been unmindful of the interests and righteous claims of those above them. (Loud and continued cheering.) I congratulate you upon the freedom granted to the apprenticed bondsmen of Mauritius, on the 31st of March last. I congratulate you upon the progress of the cause of human rights in the United States, as depicted in the burning words of my unflinching and well-beloved friend, WILLIAM LLOYD

GARRISON. (Cheers.) Finally, I congratulate you upon the prospect of a Convention of the friends of the slave from different parts of the world, to be held during the ensuing year, to consider the plans which remain to be adopted for the entire and universal overthrow of slavery and the slave-trade. (Loud cheers.)

And now, permit me to leave the language of congratulation, and, by an abrupt transition, to strike for a moment a mournful chord. I cannot resist a spontaneous impulse to embrace this, the first public opportunity of expressing my deep sympathy with those around me, in the loss which this Society, this city, and the general interests of humanity have sustained, in the removal, by the hand of death, of one whom I loved as a friend, admired as a citizen, and venerated as a man of God,—one who was amongst the earliest, the warmest, and the steadiest friends of this Society. Need I pronounce the name of PATRICK LETHAM? We cherish his memory, we hallo w his dust: may we catch his glorious spirit, and follow out his noble purposes!

I shall take the liberty, Sir, of adding, what I think will be deemed valuable, to the information already given respecting the state of the Anti-Slavery cause in the United States. It has been my privilege to receive, very recently, a number of letters from distinguished abolitionists in America, and having several of their communications on my person at present, I shall lay an extract or two before this meeting. My friend, J. G. WHITTIER, the well-known Quaker bard of America, thus writes:—‘The struggle still goes on. Discussion, every where—in the churches, the parlour, the workshop, the stage, the steam-boat, and the rail-road car.’ [I heard this evening some honest friend exclaim, ‘We have white slaves at home.’ If such there be, behold! the way to set them free. Let there be no unlawful outbreaks; but calm, rational, open discussion—discussion every where. The grievances will then soon become apparent, the remedy too, and the ends of justice will be obtained.] My friend continues—‘Discussion goes on in the State Legislatures, and in the Halls of Congress. Discussion literally shakes the nation. We are struggling apparently against fearful odds—but our confidence is strong. The strength of God is pledged

on the side of humanity. Some of us, who have been striving from the outset, occasionally grow weary—the harness of our warfare, worn day and night, sometimes galls with its links of iron, and we long for peace and quiet, but the cry of our brother in bonds is in our ear, and we cannot yield to this weakness of the flesh. We must fight on.’ My next extract is from the pen of H. B. STANTON, Corresponding Secretary of the American Anti-Slavery Society. He says:—‘ The great cause is *onward* in the United States. Our committee will make unprecedented exertions during the present year, to press our principles on the public consideration. We are to hold a National Anti-Slavery Convention on the 31st of July. On the 1st of August we shall celebrate the glorious Anniversary of West India Emancipation.’ (Cheers.)

I have now great pleasure in laying before this meeting a letter from a highly respectable and noble-minded American citizen, now in this country—WENDELL PHILLIPS, Esq. of Boston. This accomplished scholar and warm-hearted abolitionist, who has for a time relinquished the pursuit of an honourable profession, that he may devote himself to the cause of his enslaved countrymen, has done me the honour to address to me the letter which I hold in my hand, and which I shall submit entire, as a document well entitled to your consideration, not less on account of the importance of the topics which it discusses, than for the elegance and force of the language which it employs. I am particularly struck with the just and statesmanlike views which Mr PHILLIPS has adopted, in reference to the recent attempt to bring the subject of India before this country, by means of a British India Society. This letter will bring me by a natural process to the subject upon which I am particularly anxious to address you to-night, and upon which I shall dwell for a few moments, if you do not see cause to dismiss me. (Cheers.) The following is the letter:—

London, July 29, 1839.

‘ MY DEAR THOMPSON,—I am very sorry to say *No* to your pressing request, but I cannot come to Glasgow, duty takes me elsewhere; my heart will be with you though, on the 1st of August; and I need not say how much pleasure it would give me to meet, on

that day especially, the men to whom my country owes so much, and on the spot dear to every American abolitionist, as the scene of your triumphant refutation and stern rebuke of Breckenridge. I do not think any of you can conceive the feelings with which an American treads such scenes. You cannot realise the debt of gratitude he feels to be due, and is eager to pay to, those who have spoken in behalf of humanity, and whose voices have come to him across the water. The Vale of Leven, Exeter Hall, Glasgow, and Birmingham, are consecrated spots—the land of Scoble and Sturge, of Wardlaw and Buxton, of Clarkson and O’Connell, is “hallowed ground” to us. Would I could be with you, to thank the English abolitionists, in the slave’s name, for the great experiment they have tried in behalf of humanity—for proving, in the face of the world, the safety and expediency of immediate emancipation—for writing out the demonstration of the problem, as if with letters of light on the blue vault of Heaven—to thank them, too, for the fidelity with which they have rebuked the apathy, and denounced the guilt of the American Church, in standing aloof from this great struggle for freedom in modern times. The appeals and exhortations which have from time to time, gone out from among you, may seem to have fallen to the ground in vain; but far from it: they have awakened, in some degree at least, a slumbering Church to a great national sin, and they have strengthened greatly, hands which were almost ready to faint in the struggle with a giant evil. We need them still—spare us not a moment from your christian rebukes—give us line upon line, and precept upon precept. Our enterprise is eminently a religious one, dependent for success entirely on the religious sentiment of the people. It is on hearts that wait not for the results of West India experiments—that look to duty, and not to consequences—that disdain to make the *fears* of one class of men the *measure* of the rights of another—that dread no evil in the doing of God’s commands—it is on such that the weight of our cause mainly rests, and on the conversion of those, whose characters will make them such, that its future progress must depend. It is upon just such minds that your appeals have most effect. I hardly exaggerate when I say, that the sympathy and brotherly appeals of

British Christians are the sheet-anchor of our cause. Did they realise, that slavery is most frequently defended now in America from the Bible, that when Abolitionists rebuke the Church for upholding it, they are charged with hostility to Christianity itself, they would feel this. If we construe a text in favour of liberty, it is set down to partiality and prejudice. A *European* construction is decisive. *Our* rebukes lose much of their force, when they are represented, though falsely, to spring from personal hostility—from a zeal which undue attention to a single subject has made to outrun discretion. *Your* appeals sink deep—they can neither be avoided nor blunted by any such pretence, and their first result must be conviction. Distance lends them something of the awful weight of the verdict of posterity. May they never cease. Let the light of your example shine constantly upon us, till our church, beneath its rays, like Egypt's statue, shall break forth into the music of consistent action.

' England, too, is the fountain-head of our literature. The slightest censure, every argument, every rebuke on the pages of your Reviews, strikes on the ear of the remotest dweller in our country. Thank God that in this the sceptre has not yet departed from Judah—that it dwells still in the land of Vane and Milton, of Pym and Hampden, of Sharp, and Cowper, and Wilberforce—

“ The dead, but sceptered sovereigns,
Who still rule our spirits from their urns.”

May those upon whom rests their mantle be true to the realms they sway. You have influence where we are not even heard. The prejudice which treads under foot the vulgar abolitionist dares not proscribe the literature of the world. In the name of the slave, I beseech you let that literature speak out in deep, stern, and indignant tones; for the press,

“ Like the air,
Is seldom heard but when it speaks in thunder.”

' I am rejoiced to hear of your new movement in regard to India. It seals the fate of the slave system in America. The industry of the pagan shall yet wring from christian hands the prey they would not yield to the commands of conscience, or the claims of religion. (Cheers.) Hasten the day! for it lies with you, when the pro-

phcey of our Randolph (himself a slaveholder) shall be fulfilled—that the time would come when masters would fly their slaves, instead of slaves their masters, so valueless would be a slave's labour in comparison with his support. To you—to the sunny plains of Hindostan we shall owe it—that our beautiful prairies are unpoluted by the footstep of a slaveholder—that the march of civilization westward will be changed from the progress of the manacled slave coffle, at the bidding of the lash, to the quiet step of families carrying peace, intelligence and religion, as their household gods. (Loud cheers.) Mr Clay has coolly calculated the value of sinews and muscles—of the bodies and souls of men—and then asked us whether we could reasonably expect the south to surrender 1,200,000,000 of dollars at the bidding of abstract principles? Be just to India,—waken that industry along her coast, which oppression has kept landlocked and idle—break the spell which binds the genius of her fertile plains, and we shall see this property in man become like the gold in India's fairy tales—dust in the slaveholder's grasp. (Applause.) You cannot imagine, my dear brother, the impulse this new development of England's power will give the anti-slavery cause in America. (Hear, hear.) It is just what we need to touch a class of men who seem almost out of the pale of religious influence. Much as our efforts have been blessed ;—much as they have accomplished,—though truth has often floated further on the shouts of a mob, than our feeble voices could have carried it,—still, our progress has served but to show us more clearly the Alps which lie beyond. The evil is so deep-rooted, the weight of interest and prejudice enlisted on its side so vast—ambition clinging to political power, wealth to the means of further gain—that we have sometimes feared they would be able to put off emancipation till the charter of the slaves' freedom would be sealed with blood—that our day of freedom would be like Egypt's, when “ God came forth from his place, His right hand clothed in thunder,” and the jubilee of Israel was echoed by Egypt's wailing for her first-born. It is not the thoughtful, the sober-minded, the conscientious, for whom we fear. With them truth will finally prevail. It is not that we want eloquence or christian zeal enough to sustain the conflict with such—and with

your aid to come off conquerors. We know, as your WHATELY says of GALILEO, that if GARRISON could have been answered, he had never been mobbed—(Loud cheers.)—that MAY's christian firmness—SMITH's world-wide philanthropy—CHAPMAN's daring energy—and WELD's soul of fire—can never be quelled, and will finally kindle a public feeling, before which opposition must melt away. (Cheers.) But how hard to reach the callous heart of selfishness—the blinded conscience, over which a corrupt church has thrown its shield, lest any ray of truth pierce its dark chambers! How shall we address that large class of men with whom dollars are always a weightier consideration than duties—prices current stronger arguments than proofs of holy writ? But India can speak in tones which will command a hearing. (Hear, hear.) Our appeal has hitherto been entreaty—for the times in America are those “parsy times,” when

“Virtue itself of Vice must pardon beg—

Yea, curb and woo, for leave to do him good.”

But, from India, a voice comes clothed with the omnipotence of self-interest, and the wisdom which might have been slighted from the pulpit, will be to such men, oracular from the market-place. (Cheers.) Gladly will we make a pilgrimage, and bow with more than eastern devotion on the banks of the Ganges, if his holy waters shall be able to wear away the fetters of the slave. (Cheers.) God speed the progress of your society! May it soon find in its ranks the whole phalanx of sacred and veteran abolitionists! No single, divided effort, but a united one to grapple with the wealth, influence, and power, embattled against you. Is it not Schiller who says:—“Divide the thunder into single notes, and it becomes a lullaby for children—but pour it forth in one quick peal, and the royal sound shall shake the heavens;” so may it be with you—and God grant, that without waiting for the “United States to be consistent”—before our ears are dust, the jubilee of emancipated millions may reach us from Mexico to the Potomac, and from the Atlantic to the Rocky mountains! Your's truly, and most affectionately,

WENDELL PHILLIPS.

(Loud cheers followed the reading of this letter.)

Sir, if I should now sit down, no one here would venture to say I had not made a very eloquent speech. (Cheers.) I said the letter of Mr Phillips would bring me naturally to the subject of *India*: you perceive it has done so. Mr Phillips attaches great, but not undeserved importance to the question which, during the last twelve months, I have more than once had the honour of bringing before you. You are told that the successful prosecution of certain plans to raise and regenerate India, seals the fate of the slave system of America. This is just—this is true. But do these projects respecting India admit of success—are they such as recommend themselves to reasonable and practical men? They are,—First, we point to the continents and islands of America. We say, see there, nearly six millions of human beings in slavery, under a torturing lash and a vertical sun. Look next to Africa—hourly rent by wars, and plundered of her children.—Look at the irrefragable figures of Mr Buxton, which have demonstrated the soul-harrowing truth, that a thousand human beings are, during every four-and-twenty hours, butchered with steel, or bartered for gold, that the slave systems of christian countries may continue. (Hear.) You ask, why this bloody and inhuman sacrifice of helpless beings—why this infernal machinery of whips and chains, and stocks and collars? I answer, that you may clothe yourselves in cotton—that you may drink coffee, and sweeten your draught with sugar—that you may dine on rice, or regale yourselves with tobacco. (Cheers.) Sir, were a man to drop from the clouds, and to be told these things, he would naturally infer that these articles were indispensable—that they could be grown only in America—that they could be produced only by slave labour—that from Africa alone could slaves be procured, and that they could only be kept at work by the inhuman means now employed. (Cheers.) What would he think—what would he say, if he were told that all these articles might be raised in the country from which the slaves had been dragged—that an honourable and extensive commerce might be carried on without the necessity of wars, and without the horrors of slavery? (Cheers.) What would he think, if told, that the people who are the chief consumers, and, therefore, the principal supporters of American

slavery, have an empire of their own—whose beauty cannot be exaggerated—whose extent is limitless—whose soil is exhaustlessly rich, and whose population is reckoned by scores of millions—from which they might obtain—without coercion—unbedewed with tears, unstained by blood—all that the wants and luxurious appetites of European—aye, and American nations could possibly require. (Loud cheering.) What, I ask, would be the opinion of a visitant from another sphere, if told these things? (Hear, hear.) How do these things come to pass? Do the Americans, Brazilians, and French and Spanish colonists, instinctively delight in inflicting tortures? Is the love of chains and slavery their ruling passion? No. They love money—they see that we are an enterprising, ingenious, and fabricating nation—that here is a market for their produce—that we ask no questions when we buy—that the price we give will support them in administering a system of forced labour, and they therefore adopt and follow the trade of planters of cotton, and brokers in blood. (Cheers.) Scourges and fetters, bolts and thumb-screws, men-stealers and drivers, are but the instruments they use to accomplish a grand end, which is the reaping of gain by the supply of our unceasing demands. (Cheers.) And yet we are an anti-slavery nation—(Ironical cheers.)—and yet we paid twenty millions to get rid of the abomination of Negro bondage in our own colonies—(Cheers)—and yet we have societies for the conversion of other nations to abolition principles! Is there no inconsistency here? Are not our professions justly liable to reproach, and to be branded as insincere and hypocritical? While we are assembled here, to point our appeals across the Atlantic, that they may reach, if possible, the conscience of the American, might not a voice of thunder speak from every warehouse in this city, gorged with the produce of the slave—from every spinning jenny and loom employed in the service of slavery—‘Woe unto you, Scribes, Pharisees, Hypocrites, for you send memorials, and missionaries, and remonstrances, over sea and land, to denounce the crime of holding men in bondage, while you yourselves stay at home to raise the wages of unrighteousness—the price of blood—and feed to fatness the cupidity of those who are willing to sell themselves to you in the service of sin.’ All

this we should deserve if India were not ours—or if the country were blotted from the map of the world. How much more, while India is in existence—while India is an integral portion of our own dominions? Why prefer New Orleans to Calcutta—Mobile to Bombay—Cuba to Madras? Why leave freemen famishing by millions on the banks of the Ganges and the Jumna, that you may steal men from the banks of the Gambia and the St Mary's, and lash them to their hated task on the banks of the Mississippi and the Potomac? (Great cheering.) But enough; you see, you feel the crime of despising that splendid country and that interesting race, on whose behalf so eloquent an appeal has been made, in the honest, fearless, admirable speech of my gallant friend MAJOR-GENERAL BRIGGS. (Cheers.) You are not called upon to cease your remonstrances against slavery; you are not required to forego any of the comforts or luxuries of life, or to circumscribe your trading operations, or to go to war with piratical nations, or to levy discriminating duties, or to enforce forgotten treaties, or to call together congresses of nations; but quietly, consistently, but energetically, to improve your own territory—to employ your own husbandmen—to reap your own soil—in a word, to put into operation a principle of political economy, which would as surely work the destruction of slavery and the slave trade, as the produce of the labour of fifty millions of freemen, procured at the rate of twopence per day for each man, must drive out of every market, where fair competition is permitted, the produce of six millions of slaves, whose support averages from eighteen to thirty pence per day. (Cheers.) How truly unexceptionable, how simple, how patriotic, how certain, is the course thus pointed out! Let me, Sir, specify, in the fewest possible words, the principal grounds on which I deem it the duty of this nation, and of such a meeting as this in particular, to take up the cause of India. India, in itself considered, is worthy of our regards. It is the largest, richest, and most available portion of our territory. The people, eighty or a hundred millions in number, are civilised, ingenious, docile, acute, and industrious—they are, besides, in need of our interposition to save them from an oppressive system, which is breeding discontent, and occasioning disease, and famine, and death. Their intellectual condition requires our consideration and aid. Various kinds of slavery

exist, which have to be inquired into and abolished, if within the legitimate sphere of our authority in that country. (Hear, hear.) The inhabitants of India, if raised from their present state of poverty, would become the best and largest consumers of the surplus manufactures of our own country. The political condition of India must be affected beneficially by every philanthropic effort, inasmuch as our tenure of dominion is the attachment of the people to our sway. Look then at India by itself. Half a million of square miles of territory! Ought not its resources to be explored? One hundred millions of inhabitants! Ought not their wants to be considered? They are poor, they must be fed—they are naked, they must be clothed—they are disaffected, they must be conciliated—they are industrious, they must be employed. Our humanity, our patriotism, our justice, are appealed to in behalf of British India. But my next ground is the anti-slavery aspect of the question. I see the battle of freedom for the degraded slave transferred to the plains of India. (Cheers.) I see that we are every moment guilty of great inconsistency, if not crime, while we neglect India, and support the slave systems of America. I see that, in the circumstances of India, we have inexhaustible materials for anti-slavery appeals to this country;—appeals to every class of motives by which men are moved to pity or impelled to action. I see that we possess, as a nation, the power of immediately diminishing, and ultimately destroying the slave trade and slavery, by improving the condition of the natives, and developing the physical resources of India. (Cheers.) I see that we are placed in circumstances of fearful responsibility, and that we cannot justify our profession before men, nor clear our consciences before God, unless we use the means that are placed in our hands. I see, finally, that by calling attention to India, and exhibiting our pacific, yet powerful principles of action, we secure the attention and support of thoughtful, practical, and reasoning men—men who would turn from us if we professed to rely solely upon moral machinery against slavery, *while our capital and trade were sustaining it*, but are ready to join us when our precepts and practice correspond, and the truth of our doctrines is recommended by the performance of our duties. I have no time to dwell, as I intended, upon the openings for commerce, and the acquisition of wealth

which India presents—nor to trace, which I might have done most clearly, the extraordinary progress which has been made in the growth and exportation of every article which has received the least encouragement—such as indigo, linseed, &c. The elucidation of these and other topics must be deferred to another opportunity. I must, however, go back to the points mentioned by our distinguished visitor, GENERAL BRIGGS. It must not be disguised that there is a great work to be done before India can reward the industry, or obtain the benefit of the capital and enterprise of this country, and it is to this work that I want you and the country at large to gird yourselves. I remember the admonition given me by a friend to-day, who said,—‘ Pray, do not deal in the stale, vague talk about “ good government,” which means any thing or nothing, as folks please to interpret it, but tell us what India wants, and how we are to get it.’ I say then, that the Government of India, which shall deserve the name of *good*, will reduce and for ever fix the land-tax, which is now the curse of the country—blighting its produce—spreading sterility over the soil, and reducing the cultivator to the state of a beggar. When India is blessed with good government, her ancient institutions will be respected, her municipal machinery will be employed, her native teachers will be sent to their original and appropriate occupation, her rivers will be rendered navigable, roads and connecting canals will be made, and the produce of the lands will be admitted to these ports upon the principle of reciprocal duties. You will ask—how are these things to be obtained? I answer, by agitation, by discussion, by petition. India, it is true, has a Board of Control, but India wants another Board. The board of control she wants is a board consisting of the whole British people—alive to the claims of misery—awake to their own interests—sensible of their responsibility, and determined to do their duty. (Loud cheers.) Let these things be brought to pass, and the spell which has bound India shall be broken—a voice shall be heard crying from the banks of the Indus and the Ganges to the myriad population of our Eastern empire, ‘ Arise, shine, for your light is come’—the Hindoo shall raise his head and smile—the earth shall yield her increase—the riches of the East, not ‘ barbaric gold and pearl’ alone, but the bountiful crop of the industrious cultivator, shall find their way to these

islands, and all who have laboured to succour and illuminate India, shall rejoice in the reflex influence of their own benevolence. Sir, I will conclude. I rejoice in the prospects which are opening for India. I triumph by anticipation in the results which will, through India, be wrought out for the rest of the world. I call upon the slave in America and the children of Africa to rejoice—but especially do I call upon my country to awake to a sense of her dread accountability to God, for the use of the mighty power by which she can control the fortunes and the fate of so large a proportion of the whole human race. (Loud cheers.) To her I say,

Britain! thy voice can bid the dawn ascend,
On thee alone the eyes of Asia bend.
High Arbitress! to thee her hopes are given,
Sole pledge of bliss, and delegate of Heaven;
In thy dread mantle all her fates repose,
Or big with blessings or o'ercast with woes;
And future ages shall thy mandate keep,
Smile at thy touch, or at thy bidding weep,
Oh! to thy god-like destiny arise!
Awake and meet the purpose of the skies!
Wide as thy sceptre waves let India learn,
What virtues round the shrine of empire burn.

Mr Thompson moved the following resolution, and sat down amid long continued cheering.

‘ That, considering the value of our Empire in India—the destitute and helpless condition of the many Millions of our Fellow-Subjects in that Country, and the intimate connexion between their Improvement and Prosperity as an Agricultural Population, and the Abolition of Slavery and the Slave Trade—this meeting regards with the purest satisfaction the formation, in London, of the **BRITISH INDIA SOCIETY**, and pledges itself to assist in promoting the great object which that Society has in view.’

J. S. Blyth, Esq., seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

FINIS.

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